

ARF NEWSLETTER

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FACULTY

March 20, 2000

#15

PLEASE MAKE NOTE OF
OUR APRIL 11 GENERAL
MEETING AT NOON IN THE
FOUNDERS COLLEGE SCR -
- A LIGHT LUNCH WILL BE
SERVED & PARKING
PASSES WILL BE
AVAILABLE FOR THE LOT
BEHIND SCOTT LIBRARY

Howard Buchbinder reports

As you can see from the contents of this newsletter, ARF is growing significantly in paid memberships, in activity and in strategic initiatives. Our membership now number 140, including new members and renewals. This represents about 1/3 of the actual faculty and librarian retirees, out of a known constituency of 315 retirees.

We are beginning to consider a new initiative in which ARF would help to develop various sorts of learning experiences for retirees which would be implemented by retired academics. This will be coming before the Executive soon and will hopefully be brought to the membership meeting for discussion.

I have been working along with YUFA in trying to

get a benefits subcommittee off the ground. The Benefits Subcommittee which is continued in the present collective agreement remains dormant and to date we still don't have such data as cost estimates. Part of this process relates to the use of the Benefits Trust Fund that is now in place. The Executive is now considering candidates for Trustees.

We continue to organize area meetings and are making efforts to communicate with active YUFA members who are close to retirement.

It has taken some time to arrange a meeting between the Chair of the Board of Governors, Charles Hantho, and the ARF Executive. It looks like this will happen on April 17, after our April 11 membership meeting.

The April 11 membership meeting is important... Join us on April 11 from 12-3 PM, for a light lunch and an interesting meeting.

George Eaton reports: New ARF concerns; Safeguarding Pension Benefits; New Mortality Tables

During 1999, the University's Actuaries noted that pensioners drawing pensions from the York Pension Fund were living longer than

expected under the outdated (1983) mortality table being used by the Plan. As a result, the variable pension (money purchase) portion was incurring losses which were being subsidized from the Minimum Guaranteed Fund, considered a short term solution. During contract negotiations in 1999, YUFA submitted to the Employer a proposal which, incidentally, was later removed from the contract bargaining agenda, concerning the introduction of a more up-to-date mortality table to eliminate mortality losses.

There appears to be a consensus, certainly on the part of YUFA and YUFA appointed Pension Board Trustees that regardless of any changes that might be made, the pensions of current pensioners will never be reduced but will be increased in accordance with the performance of the Pension Fund. This does not, however, foreclose consideration of the possibility, depending on how the attendant costs are to be met, that annual performance increases might be made somewhat less than they would otherwise be. Hence the need for vigilance on our part. In addition, therefore, to its unrelenting efforts to secure redress of, as well as significant

improvements in, extended health care and dental benefits, ARF must now stand ready to pursue all avenues available to ensure that future pension benefits of retired faculty and librarians are not materially compromised by proposed changes.

We have learnt the hard way, since 1994, that we cannot depend solely upon the goodwill of other institutional players to safeguard or promote our interests and well-being as retirees.

Your Treasurer wishes to thank the many of you -- over a hundred -- who sent in your dues (and some gifts!) in reply to our last mailing. It was a most heartening response. It strengthens our hand immeasurably to have that sort of support behind us. But there are still quite a few old (and new?) friends we have not heard from. How about it?

*Margaret Knittl on:
Lifetime Limits on Major
Medical Benefits; Where do
Your Balances Stand?*

As you know, there are lifetime limits on the medical benefits you can receive under York's retiree benefit

plans. In our plan, private duty nursing is capped at 120 days (probably 24 hour days, but not so specified). Out of country emergency services, including private duty nursing, are capped at \$10,000. For other medical expenses the arrangement is more complex. The cap is \$25,000 per insured person (retiree, spouse, any dependent children). A single retiree must run up eligible expenses of \$175 before qualifying for any refund. He/she then qualifies for an 80% refund on any further eligible expenses. These refunds are charged against one's \$25,000 lifetime account. However, at the end of each calendar year charges up to \$1000 are forgiven; only refunds over \$1000 should remain charged against one's lifetime account. But be warned: the writer recently found that on her own account this pay-back had not been made. Mistakes can and do happen. If you can, check the information you receive against your own records.

It's a little different for insured families in that family eligible expenses must top \$275 before the 80% refund kicks in. Thereafter refunds are charged against individual lifetime accounts. The year end forgiveness of charges up to \$1000 applies to each individual account.

All this is complicated enough that you might

suppose the company administering the plan-- formerly London Life, now Great West-- would supply a year end statement of account to each retiree. Such has not been the case. If you want to know what your current balances are, you must make individual enquiries -- of whom has not been too clear. The Benefits and Pensions Office has now ordered up reports on the current balances of all faculty retirees. Thus, by the time this letter reaches you, you may be able to get a report on your balances from one of the two counsellors who service academics: Terisa Ducharme at ex. 33912 if your surname begins with a letter from A - L: or Donna Morris at ex. 40181 if it begins with a letter from M - Z. Should the counsellors not yet have the reports in hand, try Great West at 1-800-263-5742. (Unfortunately, I don't know the name of the responsible person there.) If the information you receive leaves unresolved questions or doubts in your mind, try for the top: Janet Rowe, Manager, Pensions and Benefits Services, at 736-5005, though she's a busy person and may be hard to reach. Good luck!

Ian Sowton on ARF
Membership

Are you a Marf? -- a member of the Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians? The Association needs Marfs, it needs Marfs in good standing, which is to say paid-up Marfs.

Because of the recent establishment of a Trust Fund to help provide supplementary health and dental benefits to retirees, there is a new urgency to ARF's efforts to build and maintain as large a membership as possible.

[i] An up to date membership list is by far the most foolproof way of tracking those who are eligible for supplements and informing those who stand to benefit from them. It is not a simple matter to create an accurate, up to date list of retired librarians and faculty: for one thing, the Administration has some risible notion that such a list should not, on grounds of violation of privacy, be given to ARF; for another, the Administration's own list is incomplete: some early retirees, especially those who withdrew their money purchase accounts from the pension plan upon retiring are missing from it. Of course, ARF sees itself as representing the interests of all retired faculty and librarians whether they're paid up members of the Association or not; but the

ability to represent the whole constituency in adequate fashion is obviously a function of knowing who's out there to represent. So please identify yourself to ARF; if you haven't done so already, please become a member and encourage retired colleagues you know about to do the same.

[ii] More than ever ARF needs its members to keep paid up (current annual fee: \$25, July 1 to June 30). ARF has to play fair, financially, with YUFA. For example, we are associate members of YUFA, and the union is helping us in numerous ways, including lending us the services of its actuary. Again, as a unionized entity, YUFA was able to establish a tax-exempt trust fund on our behalf (and of course of YUFA retirees-to-be). ARF by itself could not have established such an instrument -- which is why the fund was set up under the auspices of YUFA and why YUFA is represented on the Fund's Board of Trustees. We cannot expect to enjoy these services free; we have to assume some fair share of fiscal obligation to YUFA for them. The YUFA/ARF interdependency is not always the easiest thing in the world to manage, but it's working and has its legitimate costs. The preferred "marfoid" posture is to be paid up.

As we seek the best nominees to serve as ARF's Trustees, we might keep in mind the likely duties, at least fourfold: [i] To arrange for the wise investment of the Trust funds; [ii] To make the final decisions about who is eligible for benefits from the Fund and upon what terms; [iii] To make final decisions about the way(s) the earnings of the Trust Fund are used to benefit eligible retirees; [iv] To arrange for and oversee the administration of benefits.

Don Holoch on Free Parking!!

Did you know that you can park for free at York?... at any hour, on any day... at some of the most convenient spots (the York Lanes garage, the Scott Library Lot (DD), the Atkinson lot (HH) as well as attended lots and Glendon lots)? All you need is a parking pass -- issued on request in booklets of 10 to YURA (York University Retirees Association) members. YURA has done all York retirees a great service by working out this system. Any York retiree can join for a \$15 annual fee. Go to C132 West Office Building or call Ms. How Chee Un at ext. 66228.

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FACULTY OF YORK UNIVERSITY

JOIN ARF / SUSTAIN ARF

To: Association of Retired Faculty
c/o York University Faculty Association
241 Schulich School of Business, Room 241
York University
4700 Keele Street
Toronto, ON M3J 1P3

- I wish to join ARF, to receive its mailings and support its activities
- I wish to renew my ARF membership
- I am willing to undertake occasional work for ARF
- I am not yet a retiree, but I want to get in on this as an Associate Member of ARF

Enclosed is my cheque for the period 1 July '99 to 30 June '00

- \$25 -- regular membership
- \$10 -- associate membership

Plus \$_____ as an additional contribution to help ARF in its continuing work on behalf of York's retired faculty and librarians.

Name (please print) _____

Home Address

Street _____

City _____ Province _____

Postal Code _____ Country _____

Home Phone _____ Campus Phone _____

E-Mail _____ Fax _____